

Seven ways to collect perfins

**by
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In these times of runaway inflation, most of us who collect stamps would be pleased if we could find ways to cut down on our stamp expenditures without cutting down on our collecting pleasure.

To take up the collecting of perfins is in itself a move in that direction, because perfin collecting is one of the few recognized philatelic fields in which one can have a lot of collecting activity at relatively modest cost.

But among those of us who already are into perfins collecting, how many of us are getting the most out of our time and money? The writer submits that almost any perfin collector who has much of a collection at all could expand his or her activity through the basic collection--without even spending a cent! And, on this basis, future expenditures for perfins would be more meaningful and provide more activity.

How is this possible? Well, to address the proposition to you personally--especially if you are a relatively new collector--have you ever analyzed the subject of perfins collecting to see how many different facets it really offers you? Let's take a look at the anatomy of perfins collecting to see just what it does offer.

BASIC PERFIN PATTERNS. The object of basic perfin pattern collecting is to obtain as many different perfin patterns as possible from the country or countries in which one is interested. Generally speaking, the stamp issue or denomination on which one obtains the pattern is immaterial, although most collectors probably prefer them on definitive issues in vertical format.

SYNOPTIC (ISSUE) COLLECTING. In this approach, the object is to obtain perfins, regardless of their patterns, on as many different stamp issues as possible from the country or countries one chooses. Another approach is to try to obtain any given perfin pattern on as many different stamp issues as possible.

TOPICAL PERFINS. In this approach, the object is to obtain as many different perfins as possible relating to a specific topic--such as railroads, banks, schools, and so forth. Or one may reverse the procedure and try to obtain as many different patterns as possible on stamps relating to one topic, such as sports. It is even possible to combine the two topical approaches by forming a specialty in which both the stamp design and the perfin patterns relate to the topic selected--such as railroad perfins on the U. S. railroad commemorative, Scott 922. Some consider the collecting of design perfins, such as windmills, crosses, and so forth, as a topical approach.

PERFIN PRECANCELS. In this field, the object is to obtain as many perfins as possible on as many different U. S. stamp

issues as possible that have been precancelled. Perfin-precancels of many firms can be found on numerous stamps, and some of them involve several different precancel types from the same city. A very substantial collection can be built up in perfin precancels, and the chase is quite interesting as some of the stamps are very elusive.

PERFIN VARIETIES. In this approach, the collector looks for varieties in given perfins. The variation may occur in pin placement, missing pins, position varieties on the stamp, double perfinning, two different perfins on the same stamp, and so forth.

PERFIN COVERS. Collecting perfins on cover may be looked upon as a field within itself or as an adjunct to any of the fields mentioned earlier. Covers not only help confirm the identity of perfin users, they also dress up a collection and make it more interesting--and more impressive to judges in case you plan to exhibit your perfins.

POSTAL MARKINGS ON PERFINS. I suggest that the collecting and study of postal markings on perfins is another field you might find interesting. Like covers, postal markings are important to the identification of users because they at least pinpoint the city of use and thereby narrow the search for the identity of the user. But more than this, the postal markings on perfins can be turned into a field of their own. For example, one can form a collection consisting solely of socked-on-the-nose town cancellations on perfins. Or you can add to your enjoyment of perfins just by studying the postal markings on them. Nineteenth century British perfins are a fertile field for such study.

THERE ARE OTHER WAYS to collect perfins and perhaps you have come up with just the one for your greatest personal pleasure. But if you haven't maybe you'll find something here that interests you. The list of ways to enjoy perfins is almost endless.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is the first of what we hope will be many more articles by former editor Crow. If you have a subject you'd like him to tackle in a future article, drop him at line at 1055 Tuxedo Drive, Roswell, GA 30075.*
